U.S. Department of Labor

Office of Administrative Law Judges 1111 20th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036



In the Matter of

INDIAN LADDER FARMS

Plaintiff

CASE NO. 82-WPA-6 v.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Defendant

DECISION AND ORDER

This is a proceeding filed under Section 12 of the Wagner-Peyser Act, 29 U.S.C. §349k, and the regulations set forth at 20 C.F.R. §654.400 et seq.

Indian Ladder Farms requested a permanent structural variance from the housing standards set forth at 20 C.F.R. \$\$654.412(b) and 654.407(c). Thereafter, the Regional Administrator of the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, issued his decision granting the request as to §654.412 and denying the request as to §654.407(c). Indian Ladder Farms then requested a hearing pursuant to 20 C.F.R. §654.402(d). 1/

Indian Ladder Farms, the plaintiff herein, challenges the denial of his variance request with respect to §654.407 (c)(1).2/

To qualify for a permanent structural variance, the employer must:

^{1/} By order dated October 4, 1982, the Judge indicated that the Issues can be resolved on the basis of the written record and an evidentiary hearing is not required. The parties were given 20 days from the date of the order to indicate contrary views. No pleadings were filed and hence, as stated in the October 4, 1982 order, this matter will be decided on the basis of the written record and without an evidentiary hearing.

²/ Section 654.407(c)(1) provides that: "The following space requirements shall be provided: (1) For sleeping purposes only in family units and in dormitory accommodations using single beds, not less than 50 square feet of floor space per occupant."

- (1) Show that the variance is necessary to obtain a beneficial use of an existing facility and to prevent a practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship; and
- (2) set forth the specific alternative measures which the employer has taken to protect the health and safety of workers and adequately show that such alternative measures have achieved the same result as the standards from which the employer seeks a variance (§654.402(a)).

The plaintiff in this matter seeks an exemption from the provisions of §654.407(c)(l) for housing which presently fails to comply with the housing standards in the regulation because each of the four identical rooms in question has only 96 square feet as opposed to the 100 square feet required by the regulation. The plaintiff states that the rooms in question are well lit and ventilated and correction would be difficult and costly.

The record, however, does not contain any facts to support the plaintiff's assertion that correction would be costly and difficult. Moreover, the plaintiff supplies no facts or details to support his contention that the rooms are well lit and ventilated.

The regulation requires the plaintiff to show that the variance is necessary "to prevent a practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship." The plaintiff has not submitted facts which substantiate the claim that compliance with the regulation would be unduly burdensome or impracticable.

Although the variances requested herein do not represent a substantial departure from the requirements of the regulations, the fact remains that the plaintiff has the burden of proof and that burden cannot be satisfied by conclusory and factually unsupported recitals.

Thus, the plaintiff has the burden of proving the essential elements of its case and an applicant for a waiver from a regulation "has the burden of convincing the agency that it should depart from the general rules and of demonstrating to the reviewing court that the agency's reasons for refusing to do so were so insubstantial as to amount to an abuse of discretion." Ashland Exploration v. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 631 F.2d 817 (D.C. Cir. 1980)

As detailed above, the plaintiff has not sustained his burden of proof and accordingly is not entitled to prevail, nothwithstanding the fact that the Regional Administrator's denial was in conclusory form and the defendant did not make a separate evidentiary presentation.

Accordingly, the Regional Administrator's decision is affirmed and this appeal is hereby dismissed.

WILLIAM H. DAPPER

Administrative Law Judge

DEC 6 1982

Dated:

Washington, D.C.

WHD/paw

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SERVICE SHEET

CASE NAME: Indian Ladder Farms

CASE NO.: 82-WPA-6

TITLE OF DOCUMENT: DECISION AND ORDER

A copy of the above document was sent to the following parties

on DEC 6 1982

By:

Technician

Legal

Mr. Peter G. Ten Eyck, II president, Indian Ladder Farms Executive Park Tower Albany, NY 12203

Mr. Thomas E. Hill
Acting Regional Administrator
Employment and Training
Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
1515 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

Mr. William H. DuRoss, III
Associate Solicitor for
Employment and Training
Legal Services
Office of the Solicitor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Room N2101
Washington, D.C. 20210